

speech he gave in Toronto, the event that you organized, Maude, last month, shortly before the G20 meetings. He outlined the need to support a UN declaration on the human right to water, referencing the long struggle for water rights in Bolivia, which successfully fought against Bechtel's water privatization efforts ten years ago.

Pablo Solon: In those days, I was a water warrior. Now I'm a water warrior ambassador. We have to have water declared as a human right in the UN. It is not possible to see that we have declared in the UN food, the right to food, the right to health, the right to education, the right to shelter, the right to development, but not the right to water. And we all know that without water, we can't live. So nobody can argue that it's not a basic and fundamental and universal human right. But even though, until now, it's not recognized as a human right. So, we have presented, two weeks ago, a draft resolution so that this coming month, in July, we expect to have a vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations. And we want to see which countries are going to vote against that resolution. We want to go to vote to see which governments are going to say to the humanity that water is not a human right.

Amy Goodman: That was Bolivia's ambassador to the United Nations, Pablo Solon, speaking in Toronto. Which nations are not going to say that water is a human right? Well, you said the United States didn't vote for this. Canada didn't, though they didn't vote against. What is their rationale?

Maude Barlow: Well, it depends on the country. The United Kingdom says they "don't want to pay for the toilets in Africa." That's a direct quote from somebody who wouldn't be quoted, from a senior diplomat in the government of Great Britain, that was in—quoted in a Canadian paper.

Canada hides behind the false statement that we might have to share our water, sell our water to the United States, which is nonsense. We're in way more danger from NAFTA, which declares water to be a commodity.

The United States, as you know, has not been supporting rights regimes for decades now, so this is just a continuation. And I have to tell you, listening to the statement from the United States yesterday at the United Nations, I wouldn't have thought there was any difference between George Bush and Barack Obama's administrations. It was haughty language. They scolded Bolivia. Bolivia came under a lot of heat, a lot of insults yesterday from these countries.

New Zealand and Australia are both going private. Australia has privatized its water totally, and basically it's now for sale. And there's a big American investment firm that's actually buying up water rights. It was supposed to be, originally, just to get the farmers of the big farm conglomerates to share, to trade, but now it's all gone private and international, so they're hardly going to support something that says that water, you know, is a human right, when they've commodified it and said it's a market commodity.

So, really, what you're seeing is a split between those countries that see water as a public trust, although that wasn't in the language of the legislation, but that see water as a public trust and a human right and that should belong to all, as opposed to those who are going to move to a market model. And I think that's the truth behind what happened.

And it's very important for you to know that they did not allow the inclusion of the words "access to," and that was one of the demands. I think some of those countries would have said yes to something that said "access to." And it's very important. It's not

semantic, because if you say you have access to it, then all the country—all the government has to do is provide you access. Then they can charge you, or they can have a private company come in and deliver it and charge you. And if you can't afford it, they provided you access, it's not their fault if you can't pay it. So it's very important that Bolivia and the other sponsoring countries held on to the language of the human right to drinking water and sanitation. They wouldn't drop sanitation. They wouldn't add the words "access to." And those were the sticking points.

Juan Gonzalez: And in practical terms, what will be the impact of this resolution on those efforts to continue to commodify or privatize water supplies in countries around the world, especially in the third world?

Maude Barlow: It's a fight we're in. You know, I'm not going to say that suddenly everything is going to be fine tomorrow or today, today being the day after the vote, that anybody woke up in a different situation today, anybody had more water today than they did yesterday, or more access to sanitation.

What it is is a moral statement, a guiding principle, of the countries of the world—and basically the UN is the closest thing we have to a global parliament—that they have taken a step in a direction of saying that water is a human right and a public trust and that no one should be dying for lack of water, and they shouldn't have to watch their children die a horrible death for lack of water because they cannot pay. And that was a statement that has taken us years and years to get the UN—they hadn't even debated the water issue. They hadn't even debated it in the past. They've done all this work on climate and absolutely no work on water. So it was a huge step forward to establishing some principles that we need if we are to avoid the crisis that I honestly see coming, that I think is going to be worse than anybody can imagine, in terms of the suffering.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THANKING LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART FOR HIS SERVICE IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor a great public servant and a dear friend, Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, who, after 17 years of distinguished service to our south Florida community here in Congress, is retiring. The House of Representatives is indeed losing a great man and a dedicated leader.

LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART has left a legacy that is extensive and worthy of praise. He has led a life guided by his principles, and he has not wavered in his convictions; convictions based on his love for this great country and the freedom that it embodies.

LINCOLN's story is truly an American story. Having fled the Castro regime

with his family, he became a fierce and staunch defender for human rights and the rule of law throughout the world. He became a voice for those whose own voices are silenced by repressive governments.

His commitment to public service is a testament to not only his character, but to the valuable lessons that he learned from his father, Rafael Diaz-Balart. The courage that Rafael demonstrated as he fought against Castro's totalitarian tactics left a profound impact on his son LINCOLN. It instilled in LINCOLN a sense of duty and a fierce urgency to help others.

From the beginning of his life in public service, LINCOLN devoted himself to aiding those less fortunate. Early in his career, he used his expertise as an attorney to assist south Florida's most vulnerable by providing free legal services to the poor. He also served as an assistant State attorney in Miami-Dade County.

LINCOLN began his career in politics by being elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1986 and later to the Florida Senate in 1989. And then, in 1992, he was elected to our body, the U.S. House of Representatives.

I have enjoyed working with LINCOLN as we have tackled the issues that have been of vital importance to our south Florida communities.

And two of his proudest moments, Madam Speaker, were the passage of the Helms-Burton Act and the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act, both of which he helped author. The Helms-Burton Act strengthened and codified into law the embargo against the Castro dictatorship. And the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act granted temporary protected status to hundreds and hundreds of refugees who were fleeing repressive governments in Central America.

Another proud moment came in 1997, when LINCOLN helped secure legislation that extended SSI benefits to so many legal immigrant families.

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LINCOLN has also been a tireless advocate for providing Hispanic youth the resources necessary to compete in a global economy.

Recognizing that the Hispanic community has and will continue to contribute much to our great Nation, LINCOLN helped create the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, CHLI, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides Hispanic youth with the opportunities to interact with leaders in the public and private sectors. Its Global Leaders Congressional Internship Program has helped hundreds of Hispanic students expand their professional horizons and enhance their understanding of governments and businesses.

LINCOLN will be missed in Congress, but I know that south Florida will continue to count him as a leader. He will soon begin to work closely with the